

Agong to swear in Najib on Friday
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Najib Abdul Razak will be sworn in as Malaysia's sixth prime minister on Friday by Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin.

Chief secretary to the government Mohd Sidek Hassan said that the king has consented to the swearing-in of Najib, which will be held in Istana Negara at 10am.

Najib, currently deputy prime minister and president of the dominant Umno, said he would meet the king early tomorrow with outgoing Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Officials close to the prime minister have said Abdullah would tender his resignation during that meeting.

"Tomorrow, the PM will invite me to accompany him to have an audience with the king and subject to the king's consent, then Friday will be the (swearing-in) ceremony," Najib told reporters.

"I have not had an audience with the king yet, so hopefully the king will graciously give his consent," he added.

Najib was last Thursday officially declared president of Umno, a role that effectively clears the way for him to be premier because of its dominance of the political scene.

He said he would also on Friday reveal details of the direction he wanted to take Malaysia amid economic crisis and political uncertainty, with the core of his roadmap being a programme aimed at uniting the multi-racial nation.

"I think this new thrust will ensure there will be a fairer distribution of government allocations and assistance to all communities," he said.

Shahrir submits resignation letter

Meanwhile, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Shahrir Abdul Samad has submitted his resignation letter to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at his last cabinet meeting today.

According to a Bernama report, Shahrir told reporters after the meeting in Putrajaya that his resignation will be effective from April 8.

Shahrir decided to step down as a cabinet minister after he failed to defend his seat in the Umno supreme council on April 26.

The cabinet meeting today was Abdullah's last as the prime minister.

He will relinquish his post to his deputy Najib Abdul Razak, who is expected to be sworn in on Friday.

Meanwhile, Abdullah, in his last cabinet meeting as premier, urged ministers to back Najib Abdul Razak when he takes the helm as prime minister.

Abdullah added that he was not going to interfere in the new administration but asked that his policies, which include human capital development, to be continued.

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